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MINUTES

OF THE

WARREN ASSOCIATION,

HELD AT THE

Baptiſt Meeting-Houſe

IN

ATTLEBOROUGH.

M,DCC,XCIII.

BOSTON:
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M,DCC,XCIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

MINUTES, &c.

TUESDAY, *September* 10.

1. AT two o'clock, P. M. Brother *Baldwin*, according to appointment, preached the introductory Sermon from 1 Peter, v. 1, 2. *The Elders which are among you I exhort, who am alſo an Elder.—Feed the flock of God which is among you.*——

2. After public worſhip proceeded to buſineſs. Brother Hezekiah Smith was choſen *Moderator*, and Brother Thomas Baldwin, *Clerk*.

3. Read the letters from the ſeveral churches, and took the following account of the members who have been added, diſmiſſed, excluded; or who have died the paſt year, with the preſent number in each church.

N. B. Miniſters' names in *capitals*. Licenſed preachers in *Italic*. Thoſe to whoſe names this mark * is fixed were not preſent. From churches marked thus †, we had no intelligence. Daſhes —— denote no ſettled miniſter.

Churches.	Miniſters & Meſſeng.	Added.	Diſmiſſ.	Exclud.	Died.	No.
1ſt. Boſton,	SAMUEL STILLMAN,	8		2	1	274
	Daniel Wild,					
	Micah Orcott,					
2d. Boſton,	THOMAS BALDWIN,	9	1	2	2	156
	Jacob Holland,					
Bellingham,	NOAH ALDEN,				1	49
	Ebenezer Holbrook,					
	Samuel Darland,					
Haverhill,	HEZEKIAH SMITH,	5	2	1	4	177
†Warren,						57
1ſt. Middleboro',	ISAAC BACKUS,		1		3	103
	Aſahel Shaw,					
2d. Middleboro',	EBENEZER HINDS,					30

Churches.	Ministers & Messeng.	Added.	Dismiss.	Exclud.	Died.	No.
3d. Middleboro',	Samuel Nelson,	5	2			96
	Elisha Clark,					
Charlton,	*David Rathlan,					110
	Daniel Bacon,					
	Rufus Bacon,					
Leverett,	Simeon Combs,					51
Royalston,	*Moses Kenny,	5	1		3	148
	John Davis,					
	James Kilton,					
	Samuel Hunting,					
	Nathaniel Bullock,					
Richmond,	*Isaac Kenny,	3	19	3	2	140
Wrentham,	William Williams,	1				36
	Joseph Miller,					
	Joseph Guild,					
†South Brimfield,	*Elijah Codding,					162
Attleboro',	Abner Lewis,	4		2	4	74
	John Sprague,					
†Wilbraham,	*Seth Clark,					253
†Woodstock,	*Samuel Webster,					73
Chelmsford,	John Pecken,	3	8	1		96
	Eliakim Hutchins,					
Barnstable,	Enoch Eldridge,	5				53
New Salem,	———	1	1			44
Leicester,	*Nathan Dana*,				1	48
†Freetown,	———					70
†Medfield,	*Edward Clark*,					62
Harwich,	———					
	Obed Smith,	3			1	59
†Harvard,	*Isaiah Parker,					130
Newton,	Joseph Grafton,				1	92
	Thomas Toleman,					
	Jonathan Shepard,					
	Nathan Dana,					
†Salem, (N. H.)	*Sam. Fletcher,					61
Northbridge,	*John Cooper,	24				47
	Jacob Crosman,					
	Jonathan Webster,					
Cambridge,	———	1			1	56

Churches.	Miniſters & Meſſeng.	Added.	Diſmiſſ.	Exclud.	Died.	No.
†Aſhburnham,	———					63
Providence,	STEPHEN GANO, JOHN PITMAN,	20	1		1	207
†Glouceſter,	*JOSEPH WINDSOR,					81
Sturbridge,	——— Silvanus Curtis, Jacob Shepard,	6			1	81
Templeton,	——— *David Leonard*, Joſhua Tucker,	9			1	87
†New Rowley,	*ABISH. CROSMAN,					99
Bridgewater,	GEORGE ROBINSON, James Perkins,	7				48
Weſton,	———				2	17
Randolph,§	JOEL BRIGGS, Jonathan Wales,	5		2		61
Carver,	JOHN TRIPP, Nathaniel Attwood,					16
†Hollis,	———					20
Marſhfield,	———		1			29
	Total,	124	37	13	29	3621

4. Adjourned till 8 o'clock to-morrow morning. Sermon in the evening by Brother *Peak*, from Rom. v. 2.

WEDNESDAY, *Sept.* 11.

Met according to adjournment.

5. Received a letter and minutes from the Philadelphian Aſſociation; but we were unhappily deprived of the company of Dr. Jones, their meſſenger, who was detained by bodily indiſpoſition only a few miles from us. From the Charleſton Aſſociation we received minutes only. From the Woodſtock and Vermont Aſſociations, letters and minutes by their meſſengers Elder Aaron Leland, and brother Nathan Dana. From the Shaftſbury, a letter and minutes. From the Stoning-

§ This Church was formerly called *Braintree*.

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ton Aſſociation, a letter and minutes by their meſſengers, Benj. Barber, jun. and Aſa Spaulding. From Bowdoinhan Aſſociation, a letter by brother Iſaac Caſe —And from the New-Hampſhire Aſſociation, minutes were received by Elder Peak and brother Peter Moores.

6. Read the Circular Letter prepared by Preſident *Maxcy*—After conferring upon it, Voted to refer it to a Committee to make ſome amendments. Choſe for the above purpoſe, Dr. Foſter, Mr. Pitman, Mr. Leland, Mr. Gano, and Mr. Backus.

7. Appointed Meſſrs. Williams and Clark, to prepare a Correſponding Letter.

8. On requeſt of the Church at *Leverett*; Voted, to diſmiſs them from their connexion with this Aſſociation, ſo far, as to be at liberty to join any other, of the *ſame faith* and *order*, more convenient to them.

9. A query from the Church at Providence—Whether, if any brother refuſeth to diſcharge what the Church ſhall judge to be his proportion of the expenſes that neceſſarily ariſe from the exiſtence of that Church, or is incumbent on them, ſuch as ſupporting the poor, maintaining the miniſtry, keeping the houſe of worſhip decent, &c. he is worthy of being admoniſhed and dealt with as a covetous perſon? Anſwer. Covetouſneſs is an aggravated ſin in the ſight of God, and whenever any member of a Church can be proved guilty of it, he is a proper ſubject of admonition; and no doubt in ordinary caſes, the judgment of the majority ought to be ſubmitted to.

10. Voted, To deſire the Truſtees of the Baptiſt Education Fund to meet at Boſton on the firſt Tueſday of October next, at 3 o'clock, P. M. in order to appoint a Chairman, Treaſurer, and Secretary; and to tranſact any other buſineſs that may be thought neceſſary.

11. On motion made, Voted, that Mr. *Benjamin Morgan Stillman*, be added to the number of Truſtees heretofore choſen.

12. Voted, That any ſeven of the Truſtees ſhall make a quorum. It is earneſtly recommended to the Churches of this Aſſociation, to collect, and ſend forward as ſoon

ſoon as may be, their ſeveral donations; as ſome have already given, and others were ready a year ago.

13. Voted, that the Committee appointed to give advice to any perſons, or Churches, who may be aggrieved by being taxed to other denominations; be the ſame appointed laſt year.

14. A report of the General Committee from this and the neighbouring Aſſociations, who met at Cheſhire on the 26th of June laſt, was read; from which we give the following extract: "We recommend to each of our Aſſociations, to appoint one or more of their members, to collect an account of the time and manner of the conſtitution of each Church, and when their miniſters were ordained; with any revivals of religion among them; and alſo a particular account of ſufferings from thoſe who have ſupported religious teachers by tax and compulſion; and that theſe accounts be communicated to our next General Committee." Voted, that it is the opinion of this Aſſociation, that the next meeting of the General Committee would better anſwer the propoſed deſign, to be held on the Tueſday after the next meeting of this Aſſociation at Sturbridge, 2 oclock, P. M. at which time it is hoped, that the neceſſary communications will be made.

15. Choſe the following as Meſſengers to our ſiſter Aſſociations:—To the Philadelphian, Dr. *Foſter*. To the Woodſtock, brethren *George Robinſon*, *Thomas Baldwin*, and *David Leonard*. To the New Hampſhire, brethren *Hezekiah Smith*, *Abiſhai Croſman* and *Samuel Fletcher*. To the Stonington, bretheren *Iſaac Backus*, *Stephen Gano*, *John Pitman* and *Joſeph Grafton*. To the Shaftſbury, brethren *Abner Lewis* and *Nathan Dana*. To the Bowdoinham, Elders *Baldwin*, *Grafton*, *Tripp*, and *Nelſon*.

16. The Circular Letter as amended was again read, and accepted.

17. The Correſponding Letter, prepared by Meſſrs. Williams and Clark, was read and approved.

18. Propoſed the following ſupplies.

Weſton,	Mr. Alden, laſt in October. Mr. Briggs, 1ſt in January. Mr. Snow, 1ſt in June. Mr. Dana, 1ſt in December.
Framingham,	Mr. Nelſon, 2d in February. Mr. Alden, 2d in April. Mr. Dana, laſt in May. Mr. Leonard, 1ſt in May.
New Salem,	Mr. Combs, 1ſt in June. Mr. Leonard, 4th in October.

19. Appointed Elder Backus to write the Circular Letter for next year; Mr. Gano in caſe of failure.

20. Voted to hold our next Aſſociation at Templeton, the Tueſday after the firſt Wedneſday in September, 1794.

21. Brother Gano to preach the introductory Sermon, in caſe of failure, Brother Alden.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

BRETHREN,

IN an age when mankind are regaining their native rights, and aſſuming the privilege of thinking and acting for themſelves, we deem it not unimportant, that the nature of the divine law, the deſign and manner of its adminiſtration under the mild reign of the goſpel, ſhould be explained.

A want of proper attention to this ſubject, will leave us utterly in the dark as to the deformity of ſin, and the nature of ſalvation by grace. Would you ever know your true ſtate, you muſt know your obligations; would you ever know your obligations, you muſt know the law by which they are aſcertained and defined. The laws given by GOD, to the Jews, were of three kinds, moral, poſitive, and political. Moral laws are thoſe which reſult from the fitneſs and propriety of things, and reſpect the duty and government of accountable agents. Poſitive laws are thoſe which originate wholly in the will of the legiſlator. Political, are thoſe which regulate the economy and adminiſtration of civil government. The divine, or, as it is commonly called, the moral law, neceſſarily reſults from the connexion ſubſiſting between GOD and rational beings. GOD is infinitely excellent—man is wholly dependent. Hence it is fit and reaſonable that men ſhould love GOD. That GOD is to be loved, whether we are diſpoſed or not, is the united voice of reaſon and revelation. How abſurd is it for a child to ſay, "It is not my duty to love my parent becauſe I hate him!" He pleads his crime as his excuſe. A conciſe ſummary of the moral law is contained in theſe words of Jeſus: "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart; and thy neighbour as thyſelf."

This law is perfect. It cannot therefore be ſatisfied with imperfection. If it can admit an abatement in its demands, through any infirmity or diſqualification in the creature, then it ceaſes to be a law. The nature of

juſtice is eternal right; neither to be annulled by the caprice, nor varied by the mutability of man. An immoderate attachment to the objects of our unlawful paſſions—an overbearing propenſity to juſtify the deciſions of our wills, and to approve the actions of our lives—obſcure our perceptions of truth, and induce us to accommodate the nature of the divine law to our ſinful infirmities. But let us not be deceived. Let us recur neither to our diſpoſitions nor circumſtances to inveſtigate the nature of juſtice. Let us throw aſide our prejudices; let us extinguiſh our paſſions; let us forget our infirmities. Let us riſe into the region of pure intelligence, and in the bright light of the divine Spirit contemplate GOD's law, and the extent of our obligations. That law requires the whole heart. Can it then be ſatisfied with leſs? If it can admit one degree of imperfection, by the ſame rule it can another. Where then is the ſtandard of right? No where. That law which can vary, neceſſarily deſtroys itſelf. Let us then remember that GOD's law is perfect.

This law is immutable. Its demands are always the ſame; neither varied by time or place. It not only requires us to love GOD with all our hearts, but conſtantly with all our hearts. GOD is to be loved, becauſe he is what he is. His nature originates our obligations. If then it was once right that we ſhould love GOD, it is now right, and always will be right; for he is "the ſame, yeſterday, to day, and forever." GOD's will, which is an exhibition of his nature, is the rule of our duty; not our feelings and wiſhes. Our ſins alter not GOD, and therefore alter not our duty, or diminiſh our obligations.

The law of GOD is complete. It requires perfect and conſtant love; for "love is the fulfilling of the law." But this law includes a great variety of particulars. GOD commands us not to kill, not to ſteal, not to bear falſe witneſs; in ſhort, not to ſin in any way. That love which fulfils the law is oppoſed to every kind of ſin. Hence the law extends not to our external conduct only, but to all the paſſions and motions of our hearts.

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View the law then as perfect; view it as immutable; view it as complete; requiring your whole affections, requiring them conſtantly; including what all juſt laws include. In this way you will readily perceive the uſe and deſign of the law under the goſpel. It was not given to the Jews that they ſhould obtain life by it, but "that the offence might abound." "I had not known ſin," ſays Paul, "but by the law;" and that it was "added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, until the ſeed ſhould come to whom the promiſe was made." He alſo ſtyles the law "the miniſtration of death," "the letter" that "killeth." If we apply any part of the law to ourſelves, to us it becomes the miniſtration of death. For, as we are ſinful, we can neither obey its precepts, nor endure its penalties. While we are alive without the law, perceiving neither its perfection nor extent, we imagine our own obedience adequate to its requiſitions; but when the commandment comes, arreſting our hearts by divine power, "ſin revives," diſcovering its ſtrength; we feel its condemnation; we die; we relinquiſh our hopes of life, which originated in our ignorance of the law, and were cheriſhed by a haughty confidence in our own goodneſs. Thus we become "dead to the law." You will remember, then, Brethren, that the great deſign and uſe of the law, are to exterminate our prejudices in favour of ourſelves, and to teach us the true nature of ſin. The law is not a rule by which we are to obtain life; but "Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to every one that believeth." Look then unto Chriſt. Take the law and the goſpel in him. Reſt ſatisfied with his righteouſneſs, and ſubmit nnto him who is the head and king of his people.

Our preſent meeting has been harmonious, and not without ſome tokens of the divine preſence.

And now, brethren, we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are ſanctified.

By Order of the Aſſociation.

HEZEKIAH SMITH, *Moderator.*
THOMAS BALDWIN, *Clerk.*

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